



THOUGHTS

ON LIFE

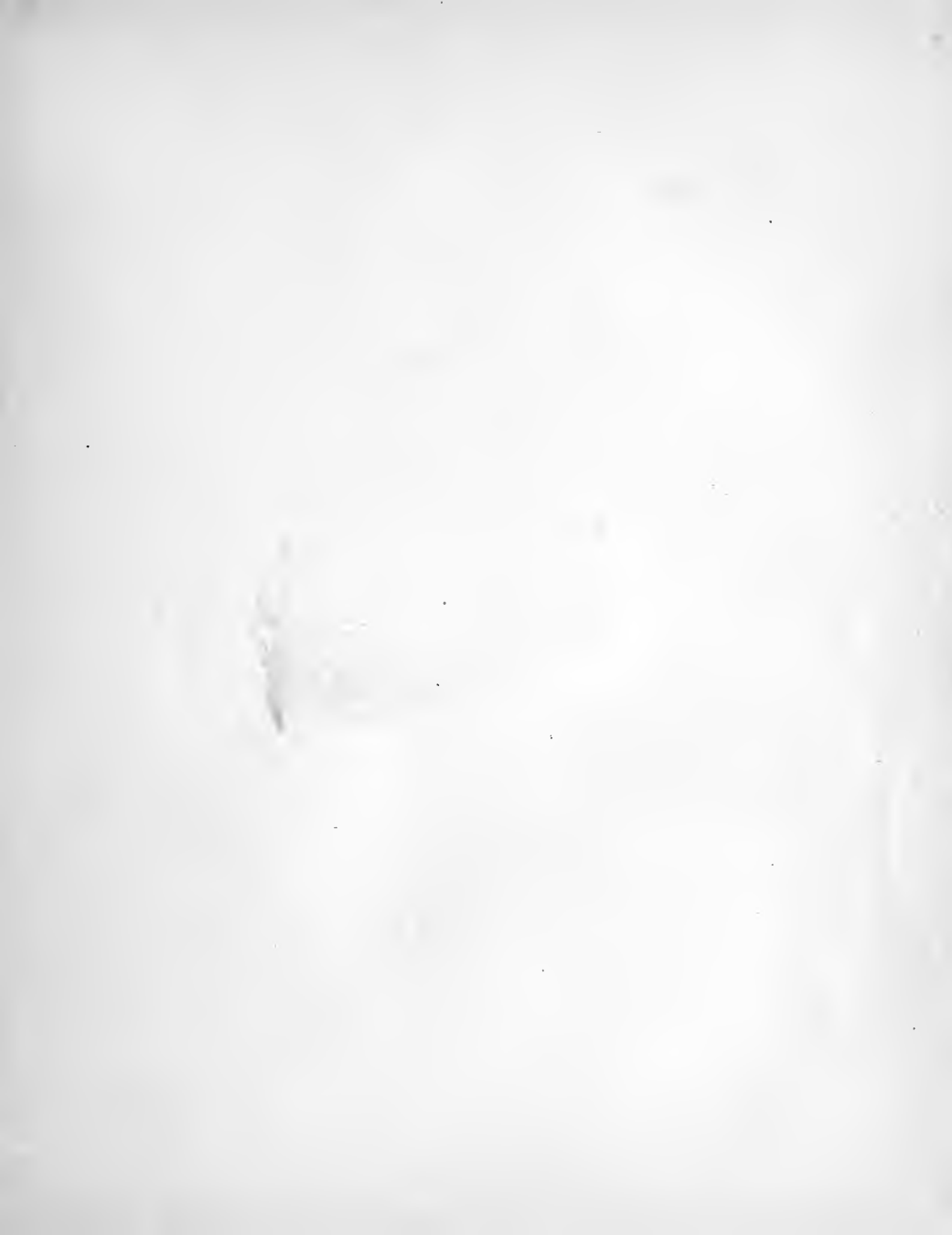
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# THOUGHTS ON LIFE.

AN ELEGY.

—BY—

✓  
DAVID MACLURE.

83



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## P R E F A C E .

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THERE are times in every thinking person's life when the mind pauses in its routine of busy thought, to lay down the burden of active cares, and rest itself in quiet and sober contemplation of existence, as bounded by the Past and the Future. At such times, the mind, in unrestrained freedom, without the impulse of any positive will, sweeps a wide horizon, and preserves a record of its impressions in an unuttered and unwritten summary of life.

It may be that in this little book the reader will find a simple transcript and echo of his own thoughts, which, though common and natural, have never before taken definite form in words. If so, the writer has accomplished his task, and will feel happy in having reproduced even a common thought, whose contemplation has perhaps often ennobled, purified, and made more wise the thinker.

The thoughts gathered here, it may be observed, are not all consecutive, but in many places desultory, or having a remote or general connection only. As suggested by the title, the poem is simply a collection of thoughts, not necessarily in close sequence, but rather in a wide and general application to one main subject.

Go out, little book, and do thy work ! Like many an earnest life, thou mayst fail, but not entirely ; for the influence which lives in a good purpose, though that purpose be not accomplished, can never be without some good result.

D. M.

NEWARK, NOVEMBER, 1882.



“What a piece of work is Man! How noble in reason!  
How infinite in faculty! In form and moving, how express and admirable!  
In action, how like an angel! In apprehension, how like a  
god! the beauty of the world! the paragon of animals.”

HAMLET, Act II, Scene II.





“Oh, majesty of Death! so mute and cold,  
In thy all-breathless silence there is speech  
More eloquent than living lips unfold,  
More potent than ten thousand tongues, to teach.”

STANZA LXVI.



# THOUGHTS ON LIFE.



## I.

Oh, beauteous World ! Oh, Earth so fair ! behold !

There is no spot in all thy broad-spread land  
That doth not charm ; for Nature doth unfold

Her boundless stores with kind and liberal hand.  
She is no miser, who in greed hath doled

Her manifold possessions, but as free  
As air hath scattered all her charms untold

In varied beauty and in majesty.

II.

The rolling plain, the towering mountain peak,  
The peaceful vale, the dense and silent wood,  
The lonely sea, its coasts so wild and bleak,  
Its sunny shores, and caves where tempests brood.  
These are her ruder forms ; here she doth speak  
In angry eloquence when storms prevail ;  
Or, like a fickle maid, with varying freak,  
She smiles and soothes to peace the troubled gale.

III.

And shouldst thou turn from these to view her hand  
In finer workmanship : Behold the flower,  
The crystal dew, the shell upon the strand,  
The golden fruitage and the leafy bower.  
In every change, from simple unto grand,  
Behold new charms developed every hour,  
As though o'er all were waved a mystic wand  
More potent than a spell of wizard's power.



## IV.

Or turn thou to the midnight sky, and lo !  
 Sublime the grandeurs of the infinite air.  
 A million torches in the darkness glow,  
 And countless worlds in silence circle there.  
 Still wouldst thou of the dread and infinite know ?  
 In contemplation view this boundless span ;  
 Consider how its orbs do come and go.  
 Obedient to one great harmonious plan.

## V.

E'en as the music of some anthem grand,  
 E'en as the rhythm of some rare old rhyme,  
 Each changing scene and season wisely plan'd  
 In graceful harmony keeps perfect time.  
 And still, if aught diverse rules sea or land,  
 In varied moods of day or season's change,  
 Each freak erratic makes the whole more bland ;  
 Monotony dwells not in nature's range.

## VI.

Like masked revelers in some old scene  
Of ancient carnival, each in a dress  
Diverse and beautiful, the year's routine  
Of months and seasons thro' all time progress.  
Each season in its native mood and mein  
Walks Time's long aisle with tripping step and stride;  
Staid Autumn russet-clad, blythe Spring in green,  
Gruff Winter, and sweet Summer in her pride.

## VII.

From icy bands, the fresh young Spring leaps free,  
And chants a matin song of hope and joy,  
While countless voices call in harmony,  
And wake each torpid force to new employ.  
From blackened field and naked bush and tree  
The symbols of a resurrection rise,  
Evolved in that eternal mystery,  
Inscrutable to science and the wise.

## VIII.

The days trip by, and from the landscape sere  
Ten thousand fresh new forms and hues arise ;  
Fair meadows, undulating far and near,  
In verdure glow beneath the smiling skies.  
The sullen earth no longer frowns austere,  
But smiles to greet the Spring's first warm embrace,  
And all the beauties of the waking year  
A God, beneficent and wise, confess.

## IX.

Each opening bud and flower and verdant spray,  
Sweet song of bird and melody of stream,  
Soft balmy southern wind, that warms the day,  
And gentle sky diffusing genial beam ;  
Each hope and joy born of the season gay,  
Which animates anew the soul of man,  
All teach the mind so prone to lapse and stray  
That immortality is heaven's plan.

## X.

As childhood grows to youth, so grows the year,  
And Spring in Summer's riper glory blends,  
The perfect works of Nature's hand appear  
And every tree with flower and fruitage bends.  
The promises of Spring fulfilled are near,  
In ripening products of a fruitful land ;  
The generous season speaks of goodly cheer,  
And lavish plenty waits the reaper's hand.

## XI.

Still, as the Summer lingers in her bower,  
Her early promises endow each day,  
But loath to leave the triumphs of her power,  
She loiters in the hastening Autumn's way.  
Yet, like a faithful Steward, when the hour  
To render up a well-kept charge is near,  
She gives a royal and unstinted dow'r  
T' enrich the stores and treasures of the year.

## XII.

The year, now like a laborer toiled and worn,  
In sombre dress and mood, shows traces deep,  
And in its waning prime seems now to mourn  
O'er hoarded stores of wealth it cannot keep.  
In splendors sad, in opulence forlorn,  
The Autumn o'er her wealth, like miser, broods,  
And while her grandeurs from her grasp are torn,  
Declines inert in melancholy moods.

## XIII.

No more are heard the soft Æolian strains  
Of balmy zephyrs laughing sweet and low,  
But sadder voices call along the plains,  
And sterner skies in colder beauty glow.  
Not less in beauty Autumn sadly reigns,  
Not less her charms appear in sorrowing plight,  
A latent beauty in each change remains  
In desolation as in fruitful might.

## XIV.

The year grows old, and like a reverend sire,  
With wrinkled features and with hoary head,  
Bemoans, alas! the loss of youthful fire,  
And ponders coming doom with shivering dread.  
But lusty still in age, with freaks of ire,  
He blusters harshly or in wailing cries,  
Moans as his numbered days of life expire,  
And in tempestuous woes, reluctant dies.

## XV.

'Tis man who hath transformed this paradise ;  
By his own act is this fair beauty blurred  
In wrongs unto his fellow man, in vice,  
In crime, of thought, and deed and thoughtless word.  
Upon the walls of Time's dead realm arise  
Appalling shapes of many an antique age,  
Thro' Time's dim corridor discordant cries  
The plaint of sorrow and the yell of rage.

## XVI.

In Life's great tome of varied annals, lo !

Is written many a dark and grievous tale ;  
Each dingy chapter tells a human woe,  
And every leaf records its blighting trail.

'Twas ever thus, that man is mankind's foe,

Since Abel's blood for vengeance cried. The ban  
That spreads its sickly film o'er heaven's glow  
Is but "man's inhumanity to man."

## XVII.

While Clio sits with quill and open scroll

To chronicle the story of the years,  
Niobe, by her side, with darkened soul,  
Bemoans the tale and melts away in tears.

As Momus wreaths his face in smilings droll,

Thalia with Melpomene doth jest ;  
Thus half the world in wealth and pleasures roll,  
The other half's in misery distress'd.

## XVIII.

The ills of life are manifold. They come  
Upon the righteous and the bad the same ;  
The rich and poor alike must take their sum,  
For trouble knows no station, caste or name.  
In life's great camp, above the merry hum  
Of thoughtless life, steals in the solemn tone  
Of Sorrow, beating his low muffled drum,  
And tramping on, with rending wail and moan.

## XIX.

A lone recluse is Grief, who shuns life's stage  
In ashes sitting from the world apart,  
He keeps his drear and lonely hermitage  
Deep in the cellars of a broken heart,  
And none may read with him the secret page  
O'er which his being broods as o'er a spell.  
The world keeps carnival throughout the age,  
While friendly Death unbars the hermit's cell.



## XX.

Bright tho' the garnered relics of the past,  
In memory's buried archives fondly stored,  
The mind is shaded with a sombre cast,  
In contemplation of its life-long hoard.  
And thus the retrospective mind, at last,  
Turns sadly to the present, there to find  
The living hour, a realm of silence vast,  
Full of sad thoughts of memories left behind.

## XXI.

Before the phantoms of a life ill spent  
That rise like struggling fiends in legions vast,  
Down deep in memory's hidden dungeons pent,  
With grave remorse, the mind stands all aghast.  
And this, the cause of feverish discontent,  
All causeless to the ken of other minds,  
The hidden canker hath no outward vent,  
It works in secret 'til the life it finds.

## XXII.

Who would not of the Lethean chalice drink,  
To drown the evil memories of the past,  
And standing on life's dark chaotic brink,  
No backward glance of sorrow have to cast.  
Oh, who would not this fabled "Canakin, clink,"  
If in its depths the opiate draught would give  
Forgetfulness, and rivet, link by link,  
In dark oblivion, joys that did not live.

## XXIII.

Yea, I have thought the joys of Earth  
Are like to meteors, in the midnight skies,  
That flit in splendor at their radiant birth,  
And leave night blacker when their radiance dies.  
Yes, men may jest and men may laugh in mirth,  
And sing a jocund song while time doth creep,  
For soon they feel, of joy, the weary dearth,  
For hearts grow heavy, and bright eyes do weep.

## XXIV.

Like fabled Atalanta in the race,  
Fast fleeing with a fleet and winged foot,  
And stooping low, with pleased and glowing face,  
To gather in her track, the golden fruit ;  
So man, in this brief fleeting earthly chase,  
Perceives with longing eyes, and pausing, stops,  
And while infatuation stays his pace,  
He gathers up the fruit that pleasure drops.

## XXV.

That man is wise, indeed, who lives his day  
With modest 'havior and a humble mein,  
Beset with praise and honors by the way,  
He still looks forward to life's closing scene,  
Nor dazzled by the world's seducing ray,  
Forgets that Death will claim his own.  
That man, thro' all his honors, is but clay,  
And like a breath that cometh, and is gone.

## XXVI.

For, oh ! when life has run its weary race,  
And panting lies beside the awful goal,  
What worldly toy, what honor, beauty, grace,  
Can coax into a thoughtless smile, the soul ;  
For who so lowly mean, or vilely base,  
Or who so haughty in his worldly pride,  
Can look with cold indifference in Death's face,  
And scoff his presence or his power deride.

## XXVII.

Who doeth wrong, may wring his hands and weep,  
And put a lengthened visage on, but still,  
Within the breast a careless thought may keep,  
And feel no true contrition for the ill.  
A true repentance, born of sorrows deep,  
Will show itself in acts of goodness rife,  
And from the wrong a generous harvest reap  
Of flowers and fruitage of a better life.

## XXVIII.

For as the god, who slew the stripling fair,  
The lad he loved, all guilelessly in play,  
Poured out his lamentations on the air,  
And mourned the fate that snatched the youth away.  
In grieving, loving reparation, there  
He caused a fragrant flower to spring and bud  
And bloom in vernal beauty, sweet and rare,  
From every sacred drop of crimson blood.

## XXIX.

There are some men, who with a cunning hand  
Steal honest laurels from a brother's brow,  
High on the ruins of despoil'd names they stand,  
The world ne'er stops to ask the question, How ?  
With lurid self-importance thro' the land,  
Among the lords of earth they come and go,  
Another token does the world demand ?  
They steal the arrow from Apollo's bow.

## XXX.

A guilty nature, held in thrall by fear,  
 Will plume itself upon a virtuous act ;  
 The motive to the world may not appear,  
 But conscience will record the guilty fact.  
 A native virtue needs no law severe  
 To prop and guide it, lest from right it fall ;  
 The law is in itself, aright to steer  
 The course of action, and the motives all.

## XXXI.

Some natures are so bound with sentiment,  
 Oh, blushing fact ! The false, the spurious kind,  
 On every silly woe their tears are spent,  
 The face is lengthened and in gloom the mind.  
 Behold ! they weep, they wail, as sadly bent,  
 They stand beside an ass's grave, in woes,  
 And as they snivel o'er the beast intent,  
 An aged mother to the almshouse goes.

## XXXII.

The ignorant are not all base and vile,  
 A learned head may top a wicked heart,  
 As many a holy garb is donn'd by guile,  
 When vice betimes assumes a virtuous part.  
 The dray-horse, travelling many a weary mile,  
 O'er rugged roads of mire and stumbling stones,  
 May 'complish much, 'tho speed aid not the while ;  
 A patient, willing heart for much atones.

## XXXIII.

Here comes Bombastes, mark his stately stride ;  
 His head uplifted, and his nostrils curl'd  
 As tho' a herald went before and cried :  
 " Ho, Ecce Homo !" unto all the world.  
 Oh, vain conceit ! Oh, poor and empty pride !  
 Put down thy high exalted head, Thou slave !  
 And know a pitfall yawns on every side,  
 And thou mayst fall into a lowly grave.

## XXXIV.

What art thou better than thy fellow man ?  
Art thou descended from a line of kings ?  
Kings live but their allotted earthly span,  
They are but men, they are but earthly things.  
And kings, tho' foremost in earth's honored van,  
Their father's sins in sorrows may atone,  
And true to nature's retributive plan,  
Bring idiots forth to drivel on the throne.

## XXXV.

Behold a humble man who steals along  
In some secluded nook of life's great plane,  
Unheeded by the general human throng,  
And scorned, perchance, by lofty fools and vain.  
His soul is great, his quiet influence strong,  
His hand is free, his heart hears every groan,  
But, like to one who stoops to something wrong,  
His modest nature shrinks to have it known.



## XXXVI.

Oh, crowning vice, disguised 'neath many a dress  
 Of seeming virtues, Proteus like, thou art  
 Assuming many shapes, oh, Selfishness !  
 To mask the meanness of the sordid heart.  
 With vacant gaze thro' crowds thou'rt wont to press,  
 Complacent in the thought of self alone ;  
 Oblivious of thy fellow man's distress,  
 So long as thou hast pleasures of thine own.

## XXXVII.

I marked where sordid Self pursued its path,  
 And when the voice of supplication cried,  
 It turned as he who shuns infectious scath,  
 And cross'd to sneak upon the other side.  
 Alas ! that life such paltry natures hath,  
 Minute enough to creep thro' needle holes,  
 To think that one might in a tea-spoon bath  
 Engulf a hundred little selfish souls.

## XXXVIII.

It is not only to the scroll of Fame,  
Nor to the sculptured stone to honor rais'd,  
Is limited the noble deed and name ;  
These, in their greatness known, the world has praised.  
But many a life has been whose dying flame  
Has flickered dimly to a lowly end,  
Whose noble deeds a deathless name might frame,  
Yet died unknown, unhonored, with no friend.

## XXXIX.

There have been heroes, more than battles make,  
Whose greatness never reached a herald's ears.  
There have been martyrs, never at the stake,  
Who suffered martyrdom thro' lingering years.  
As noiseless as the snow falls flake by flake,  
And melts unseen upon the rolling wave,  
So their pure lives in silent actions spake  
Their virtues mute, went down into the grave.

## XL.

There's many a life chained down by circumstance,  
And tethered to a close and narrow scope,  
That wildly throbs impatient to advance,  
And soar to join its dear desire and hope.  
Yet brooding in the realms of hope's expanse,  
Falls down within its narrow beaten track,  
And wakes at last from out a life-long trance,  
To find, in Death, each hope turned empty back.

## XLI.

Some trusting hearts ne'er realize desire,  
Nor ever know the things for which they sigh,  
But with a ceaseless hope that does not tire,  
They live, and trust, and long and yearn, and die.  
Sad were it then, were there a gaol no higher  
Than earthly expectations, when the breath  
Fans to a flame no more life's smouldering fire,  
Were there no hope of something after death.

## XLII.

He is a martyr, who in patience bears,  
For friendship's sake, and in a kindness large,  
The ill will of another, and in silence wears  
The base contumely of an unjust charge.  
He is a hero, who in boldness dares  
To meet adversity for conscience sake ;  
He, in the midst of adverse comment, shares  
A nobler gain than bloody victories make.

## XLIII.

A gentle heart that yearns with love's rich store,  
To draw unto itself its much loved choice,  
Why should it pine alone in sorrows sore,  
Or cower beneath a harsh, repulsing voice ?  
Yet there are golden hearts which running o'er  
With Christ-like love, must unrequited burn,  
Still lavishing upon the cold world, more,  
More love, than heartless Earth cares to return.

## XLIV.

Alas ! for such, whose aspirations soar  
In noble ardor from Earth's plodding pack,  
With pulses throbbing, with a thirst for more,  
More noble things to fill each present lack,  
Yet find each eager trust consumed before  
The stern realities of trammeled life,  
A blighted fruitage, and a bitter core,  
To mock the ending of a noble strife.

## XLV.

Time creeps upon us unawares. The years,  
Like ocean's waves, roll up, and onward go;  
The burdens of the day, hopes, smiles, and tears,  
Move ever with a ceaseless ebb and flow.  
Look back upon the rolling Past, that rears  
Its waves in silent tempest, and behold !  
It fills the mind with many mingled fears,  
Fears for the things the Future may unfold.

## XLVI.

And shall we wail and sorrow for the dead ?

Nay, rather for the living drop a tear ;  
Theirs is the moist eye, theirs the heart of lead,

Theirs the drooping soul that needeth cheer.

The living have life's future all to dread ;

Then weep for them, for them remains the woe ;

The dead from all the ills of life have fled,

They leave their sorrows and their ills below.

## XLVII.

Oh, that on some Parnassian height, the mind

Might find the secret oracle of fate,

And rise from present bondage, cramped and blind,

To learn the mysteries of its future state.

But no, this cannot be, we may not find

A voice that speaks to us prophetic truth ;

All grope in darkness to an end destin'd

Alike the hoary sage, the simple youth.

## XLVIII.

We know the present, and the bye-gone, too ;

We know what we have been, and what we are,  
But, oh ! that we the unborn future knew !

Would it the present's sweet contentment mar ?  
Alas ! We know not. *Death* alone is true.

But what shall fill the space that lies between  
We cannot say ; we may not catch the clue,  
Or know our parts for each succeeding scene.

## XLIX.

For good or bad our lives an influence make,

Perchance to live and spread when we are dead ;  
E'en as the pebble thrown into the lake

Will move the wave in widening circles spread,  
Each circle widening, widening till it break

Upon the margin of its little sea,  
So every influence doth its journey take,  
Perchance to break upon eternity.

## L.

A true Philanthropist is he, tho' poor,  
 Who gives to woe a sympathetic tear,  
 Who speaketh kindly words and counsel pure,  
 And gives to sorrow's tale a list'ning ear ;  
 Yea, even he, who in a virtue sure  
 Sets forth a good example through life's span,  
 And all, who in a humble way, endure  
 To ameliorate the troubled lot of man.

## LI.

A virtuous tyrant, sitting on his throne,  
 May rule alone with haughty, cruel pow'r ;  
 A despot ruler, while his subjects groan,  
 His holy whim may dictate every hour.  
 But soon, ah ! soon, the enforced good is flown,  
 (A sluggish calm upon a boisterous sea,)  
 For Virtue driven is a slavish drone,  
 And turns to vice, and riots wild when free.



## LII.

But Virtue ruled by kindness ever thrives,  
 And grows, and spreads in higher grade,  
 Yea lives, when gone the goodly lives,  
 Of those whose kindly will the precepts made.  
 The law of kindness breaks the iron gyves  
 Of close restraint, and gently leads the will ;  
 Captive virtue now no longer strives,  
 But longs for more of gentle bondage still.

## LIII.

A little child, in sweet and gentle speech,  
 May over-rule the monarch's stern command.  
 Kind words and gentle tears, persuasive teach  
 The unlearned lessons councils stern have plann'd.  
 'Tis in the power of kindness felt by each  
 To lift a wayward world from strife and sin ;  
 The heart's warm influence far and wide doth reach,  
 " One touch of nature makes the whole world kin."

## LIV.

Philanthropy from riches does not spring,  
Tho' wealth this fair repute hath oft acquired ;  
But tho' oft clad in vesture of a king  
There are Philanthropists in rags attired.  
It hath no outward show, but it doth bring,  
Its gift from out the abundance of the heart,  
Tho' like the widow's mite, the offering,  
A generous prince can act no greater part.

## LV.

Oh, deathless bard of Scotia's rugged land,  
Across the seas that wash thy native shore,  
The music of thy heart, on every strand,  
Sings like a minstrel at each humble door.  
Sweet Bard of Ayr, with tribute-giving hand,  
Unto thy tomb a world in homage turns ;  
Thy life was simple, but thy mission grand,  
Brave, unrewarded peasant, Robert Burns !

## LVI.

To thee, oppressed and downcast ones, he sung ;  
 To thee, brave toilers 'neath the weary yoke,  
 The lowly soothed, the proud with venom stung,  
 And flayed the hypocrite with lusty stroke ;  
 The fawning slave he scourged with bitter tongue,  
 The erring ones forgave, with heart and pen,  
 And still his life to one grand purpose clung :  
 To seal in love the Brotherhood of Men.

## LVII.

Oh, noble men are they who dare to be  
 The champions of a poor and suffering cause !  
 Inspired by love of right and liberty,  
 The advocates of just and righteous laws.  
 The ark once launched upon the troubled sea,  
 The billows toss'd, but did not overwhelm ;  
 A Lincoln makes a race of bondmen free ;  
 A noble Czar emancipates his realm.

## LVIII.

The sower is no less than they who reap,  
Nor less is he, who, fostering the thought  
Of philanthropic action, doth but keep  
The thought alive, tho' still no deed be wrought.  
The living germ of thought may seem to sleep,  
But time will call it into vigorous life,  
A thought once uttered, tho' in secret deep,  
May be the watchword in a world-wide strife.

## LIX.

So e'en a child these lives may emulate,  
And in its simple way and humble place  
May wield an influence good and great,  
And lisp in wisdom for an unborn race.  
For influence hath no limit to its state,  
'Tis born with every life, and still for aye  
Immortal it exists. What we call Fate  
Is but this influence in its widespread sway.

## LX.

There is no life that hath not in its day  
Its special work and mission to complete ;  
It matters not how circumscribed the way,  
It matters not what snares beset the feet.  
Arising from the humblest clod of clay,  
Poor, dull, obscure, yet still it doth possess  
A latent pow'r, whose limits none can say,  
No soul was ever born but to progress.

## LXI.

Oh, worthy strife ! of right against the wrong,  
Of principle opposed to gilded pride,  
The strife to rise amid an erring throng,  
And stand, a brother, at each good man's side.  
The strife in natural weakness to be strong,  
To rise o'er self, to grow in purer worth,  
And dying, still a goodly life prolong,  
Thy spirit moving kindly on the earth.

## LXII.

No man can say, no prophet can foretell,  
The destiny that waits this anxious strife ;  
But certain as the pall, and funeral knell,  
A certain duty claimeth man's brief life.  
To do his work as earnestly and well,  
As heaven's endowments and his own accord,  
To walk progressing to the narrow cell,  
And through its portals enter his reward.

## LXIII.

What man is he whose mind considereth not  
The course of life, its sure and hasty close,  
And pondereth not the inevitable lot,  
As past his door the pall and coffin goes ?  
What man, who seeing thus his brother bro't  
In vigorous health and life's prosperity,  
To lie in earth, to moulder and to rot,  
Thinks not, When shall the message come to me ?

## LXIV.

That man is but a fool, yea trebly so,  
By birth, by education, and by years,  
And in the startling hour of sudden woe  
His end shall be in horror, dread and fears.  
Too late, too late, the careless mind will know,  
The lessons that prepare the flesh to die,  
Peace will not then her gentle calm bestow,  
Nor resignation close the glazing eye.

## LXV.

We stand like prisoners at the fatal block ;  
Doom rests upon the axe a breathing spell,  
'Til Fate shall toll the hour upon the clock,  
Alike a warning and a funeral knell.  
There is no power can stay the impending shock,  
The hand of Destiny will not relax ;  
We e'en must follow our ancestral stock,  
Our children hurry in our beaten tracks.

## LXVI.

Go to th' abode of Death, and there behold  
The marble form, so rigid, silent, dread,  
And tell me, who is there, of young or old,  
Can look with cold indifference on the dead ?  
Oh, majesty of Death ! so mute and cold,  
In thy all-breathless silence there is speech  
More eloquent than living lips unfold,  
More potent than ten thousand tongues, to teach.

## LXVII.

There is no flippancy in thy command ;  
Thou claimest deep and all-absorbing heed :  
Thy dignity is awful, grave and grand,  
Thou art a sovereign and a king indeed.  
Thy sway is universal in the land,  
O'er all thy realm, thy tireless footsteps go,  
The sceptre never falleth from thy hand,  
All are thy subjects, all thy mandate know.



## LXVIII.

Tho' nations, laws, and manners pass away,  
And fashions old to newer styles give place ;  
Tho' raven locks are turned to silvery gray,  
And rosy cheeks portend the withered face ;  
Tho' templed monuments in dust decay,  
And dim oblivion hides the victor's fame,  
Still thou, "old-fashioned Death," from day to day,  
From age to age, unchanging art the same.

## LXIX.

What profit shall it be to know all things,  
Forgetful of the fate that endeth all ?  
What gain to soar afar on Wisdom's wings,  
And faltering in the end to faint and fall ?  
A sage is he, who to his knowledge brings  
The wisdom of each day that passeth by,  
And learns to live while unto life he clings,  
A greater, he, who learneth how to die.

## LXX.

There is a plant that springeth from the seed,  
Its verdant plume in modest growth it rears,  
Unlike the gaudy flower, the transient weed,  
But once it bloometh in a hundred years.  
Still, as it grows, no eye may note or heed,  
But when life's century ends its final hour,  
It blooms in beauty, dies, and gains, indeed,  
The consummate perfection of its flower.

## LXXI.

So ever with the true and upright may it be,  
That when the closing hour of doom draws nigh,  
Perfected may it greet eternity,  
And in a life completed, nobly die.  
Die full of honor, grace and purity,  
Die in the fulness of a ripened life,  
Triumphant in the hour that setteth free,  
Life's mission finished, and at rest from strife.

## LXXII.

O, thought sublime ! for grieving hearts most sweet,  
That in a fairer realm, beyond this sphere,  
Hearts are united, and the soul doth meet  
The ones it fondly loved and cherished here.  
Oh, thought sublime ! that as the seasons fleet,  
And Death steals on with soft and noiseless tread,  
It parteth not, but maketh more complete,  
The chain that links us with our sacred dead.











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